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Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 82, No. 3 March 1999

1998 Oakland Christmas Bird Count Results

One hundred ninety-two participants braved the cold winds, rain, and in many places snow(!), to hit the trails, shorelines, hilltops and open bay waters to participate in the 1998 Oakland CBC. As always, everyone reported having spent a great day in the field with

groups sharing some interesting birding stories at the count dinner. It was exciting to hear of all the unusual birds seen this year! Once again, the Oakland count was the most popular in California (based on having the most participants) and one of the top ten in the country.

Highlights from the 1998 CBC include the following unusual birds: 2 Snow Geese (seen 8 years out of the last 25 years on the Oakland CBC) one at Emeryville and one in the Point Isabel area, 1 Ross' Goose (seen 3 out of 25 years) at the Berkeley Waterfront, 1 Tufted Duck (4 out of 25 years) at Lake Merritt, 2 adult Bald Eagles (5 out of 25 years) 1 at Lafayette Reservoir and 1 at the North end of San Leandro, 2 Surfbirds (seen for the first time in count history) at the Point Isabel area, 1

Glaucous Gull (seen 3 out of 25 years) at the Berkeley Waterfront, 3 Long-eared Owls (seen 2 out of last 25 years) at Siesta Valley, 30 Tree Swallows (seen 4 out 25 years) at San Pablo Ridge, 1 Tennessee Warbler (seen for the first time in count history) at Lake Merritt, and a Black & White Warbler (seen 7 years out of 25 years) also at Lake Merritt. We had record highs for the following species: Common Merganser (147), Golden Eagle (7) (Same birds flying around the Count Circle so they can be counted multiple times and break the record?), Heermann's Gull (13), Black Phoebe (158), and Brown Creeper (86). Our species total of 181 (counting the swan sp. and Selasphorus, sp.) is a record high for the 25 years that we have data for the Oakland CBC.

For the second year in a row, we enjoyed the participation on the count of students from Jefferson Elementary School. They call themselves the Chickadees, a classroom group led by science teacher John Poole. Thanks to John for making all the arrangements for the Chickadees to join us and to the area leaders who hosted them. The Upper San Leandro Reservoir area had a small group of Boy Scouts who enjoyed all the hiking and birding with Russ Wilson, the area leader.

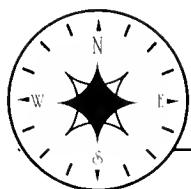
For lowlights, we had the lowest number of individuals in count history

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Seed Sale

See page 5

Our next birdseed sale pick-up will take place on March 26 and 27, 1999. If you wish to order seed, please fill out the seed-order form on page 5 and mail it to us with a check made out to GGAS, with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Orders should be received in the GGAS office by Thursday, March 18. Seed pick-up will take place Friday, March 26, 3-6 pm and March 27, 9 am -12 noon at the Golden Gate Audubon Office in Berkeley.



Field Trips Calendar

GAS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

SUNDAY, MARCH 7, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

See March Gull for details. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, MINI TRIP TO MITCHELL CANYON.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. See February Gull for details. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. (\$)

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, ARROWHEAD MARSH AREA, MARTIN LUTHER KING REGIONAL SHORELINE.

Meet at 9 a.m. From Berkeley, take Hwy 880 (Nimitz) to the Hegenberger Rd. exit. Drive west to Doolittle Drive and turn right. Go a short distance and turn right again onto Swan Way. Turn left after a block and take the dirt road to the parking lot at the end. On this half-day trip, we expect to see shorebirds and waterfowl, and perhaps Clapper Rail. We will bird the marsh and the new wetlands area. Heavy rain cancels. Beginners welcome. Leader: Graham Etherington (510) 664-2867.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, LAS GALLINAS SEWER PONDS, MARIN COUNTY.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot. Take 101 north and exit at the Lucas Valley Drive/Smith Ranch Road off ramp. Go east on Smith Ranch Road to the end. Take a sharp left to the sewage treatment ponds, just before the county park. Drive past the headquarters to the parking lot on the left. We will see ducks, shorebirds, raptors and others

birds, keeping in mind that anything can show up. Trip will end at noon. Beginners welcome. Leader: Hugh Cotter (415) 931-7736.

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, RICHARDSON BAY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, MARIN COUNTY.

Meet at 10 a.m. at Audubon Center in the Wildlife Sanctuary, 376 Greenwood Rd. in Tiburon. Take Hwy 101 to the Tiburon Exit (Rt. 131). Turn toward Tiburon on Tiburon Blvd. and go about one mile to Greenwood Cove Rd. Turn right and follow the road about five miles. You will see a sign on the right that says Richardson Bay Audubon Center Sanctuary. Please park on the street. We will enjoy a 45-minute slide show in the classroom, then from 11 to 12, look for birds along the trail and along Richardson Bay shoreline, followed by a brief tour of the historic Lyford House (always a highlight). After lunch, we will probably carpool to the Corte Madera shoreline for more waterfowl. Trip will end about 2:30. Bring lunch. Beginners welcome. Leader: Ranger Bill Bixby (415) 388-2524, Wed-Sun., daytime.

SATURDAY MARCH 27, SAN FRANCISCO BIRD BLITZ.

Meet at 7 a.m. See February Gull for details. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983 (*)

SATURDAY, APRIL 3, BREEDING BIRDS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Most of our summer breeding species will be in residence. Many male birds will be singing or displaying. Some hummingbirds will be on their second broods. There'll be a few lingering winter residents (like wigeon and scoter) but expect the mockingbird, White-crowned Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbird, Hooded Oriole, Marsh Wren, Barn Swallow, Common Raven and many other summer species to be territorial and vocal. We'll study where each species nests and some nest types. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Land's End parking

lot on Merrie Way just east of the Cliff House. Trip will end at noon. Leader: Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229, harry_fuller@zd.com. (*)

SUNDAY APRIL 4, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. (reminder: this is the first day of daylight savings time) at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular 1st Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

SATURDAY, APRIL 10, BOTHE -NAPA VALLEY STATE PARK.

Meet at 9 a.m. at the parking lot in front of the Visitor Center (at right just inside the park entrance). The park is located on Hwy. 29 about five miles north of St. Helena, and is exceptionally beautiful in spring: full of birds and wildflowers, but rarely crowded with human visitors. From the East Bay, take I-80 north to Vallejo; take the first Vallejo exit and go north on Hwy. 29. From San Francisco, take 101 north to Hwy. 37 (about 20 miles); turn right on 37 to Sears Point. Go left on Hwy. 121 north and east to Hwy. 29, thence north about 20 miles to the park (or go through Oakland as above: the distance is much the same, about 65 miles total). Allow plenty of time for this drive - it can be foggy and very slow going. The birding will be largely by ear; the walking, about three miles or so, definitely non-athletic. Bring lunch and liquids. Trip will end early to mid afternoon. Beginners are welcome. Rain cancels. Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. (\$)

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, SUNOL REGIONAL PARK.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. inside the park entrance at the parking lot on the left. See April 14th trip for directions to the

park. Bring lunch and liquids. We should see Golden Eagles, a variety of winter residents and early migrants. This trip is also good for wildflowers. Leader: Ron Lindeman (510) 636-0311. \$

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, MINI-TRIP TO SUNOL REGIONAL PARK.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the ranger station parking lot inside the park near the green barn. Take Hwy. 680 south to about eight miles beyond the intersection of Hwy. 580. Turn off at Calaveras Rd.; go left (south) and follow the signs to Sunol Regional Park, about 5 miles. We may see Lark Sparrows, Golden Eagles, Bullock's Orioles, plus resident birds of the area. Bring lunch. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman \$(*)

SATURDAY, APRIL 17, POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASORE ELEVENTH ANNUAL ALL-DAY BIRDING BLITZ

(Joint activity: GGAS and National Park Service.) Meet at 8 a.m. at the Five Brooks Trailhead parking lot, approximately 3.5 miles south of Olema on the west side of Hwy. 1. We will bird the Five-Brooks Pond area, Limantour Spit, Drakes Beach, Chimney Rock and Point Reyes, ending at Bear Valley for a multi-habitat trip that usually tallies over 100 species. Bring water, food, and wear layered clothing for variable weather. Leaders: Leon Abrams (415) 453-9980 (work), (510) 843-4107 (home) and Cathy Purchis (510) 865-9482. (*)

SUNDAY, APRIL 18, TIDEPoolING.

This half-day trip will meet at 7 a.m. at a San Mateo Coast location to be announced. Although participation is by reservation only and the number of participants will be limited, it is recommended for families. We will be introduced to the many fragile creatures that inhabit a tidepool. Call leader Ron Lindeman (510) 636-0311 for reservations. Heavy rain cancels.

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, MINES ROAD, LIVERMORE AREA.

Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot of the Nob Hill Shopping Center. Take I-580 east and turn right on No. Livermore Exit. Continue south two miles to the Nob Hill Shopping Center at So. Livermore and Pacific in Livermore. From there, we will caravan on mountain roads to I-5. We can expect to see Bullock's Orioles, Lewis' Woodpecker, Lawrence's Goldfinches and Phainopeplas in this habitat. Bring food and liquids. Those who want are invited to continue with the group until dark. Because of limited parking along roads, carpooling is strongly recommended. Leader: George Bing (925) 443-5868.

SUNDAY, APRIL 25, BOLINAS LAGOON AND AREA, MARIN COUNTY.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the parking lot of the school about 1 1/2 miles north of the town Stinson Beach, on the east side of Hwy 1. We will bird some of the premier Marin County locations, starting with Bolinas Lagoon, then caravan to the Duxbury area, and other places as the leader decides. This will be an all day trip, so bring lunch. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Ken Burton (415) 669-1847.

FRIDAY APRIL 30 – SUNDAY MAY 2, PALM SPRINGS, MT. SAN JACINTO AND MORONGO VALLEY.

This three day southern California trip for GGAS members is by reservation only and will be limited to 20 participants including leaders. A detailed itinerary will be provided to participants at a later date. However, reservations on a flight to Ontario Airport are recommended ASAP. Contact Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936, rscalf@jps.net, or Lillian Fujii (510) 236-4167 for reservations. Leaders: Rusty Scalf, Lillian Fujii and Steve Hayashi.

FRIDAY–SUNDAY, JUNE 4-6. YOSEMITE'S BIRD LIFE, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK.

The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in early June. A variety of habitats supports a rich diversity of bird life, typically including seven flycatchers (four Empidonax), three vireos, seven warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage. Meet at the Big Oak Flat entrance on Friday, June 4, at 5 p. m., and at 7 a.m. on Saturday, June 5, and Sunday, June 6. (If you arrive later Saturday morning, meet the group in Hodgdon Meadow behind the Hodgdon Meadow Group Campsites.) The meeting place is the large parking lot 100 yards inside the park entrance on Hwy. 120 (30 miles from Yosemite Valley). On Saturday we will bird all day and look for owls in the evening. On Sunday we will end by 3 pm.

Nearby campgrounds include Hodgdon Meadow and Crane Flat in the Park (reservations required – (800) 436-7275); and Forest Service campgrounds Dimond O on Evergreen Road (the road to Hetch Hetchy), and Sweetwater on Hwy. 120.

Lodging on or near Hwy. 120 includes Sugar Pine Ranch (209) 962-7825, Yosemite Westgate Motel (209) 962-5281, Evergreen Lodge (209) 579-2606, Lee's Middle Fork (209) 962-7408, and Buck Meadows Lodge (209) 962-5281.

Bring warm clothes, rainwear, rubber boots (wet meadows) and a large flashlight for owling. Be prepared to pack a lunch and walk about six miles. Leaders: Dave Quady (510) 704-9555 and Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001. \$ (*)

PLAN AHEAD: Yuba Pass, Peter Allen, June 19-20; Lassen National Park, Dan and Joan Murphy, June 25-27; Yosemite Alpine Ecology, George Peyton, July 24-25.



Driving in Western Sonoma County (from Petaluma to Bodega Bay) at this time of year is heavenly. The softly rolling hills are dotted with black and white dairy cows and herds of chubby sheep with tiny lambs. The bright green color of the new grasses almost hurts your eyes and is as intense as Ireland's famous emerald isle. Enormous flocks of blackbirds resemble dark clouds as they alight in cow paddocks or on telephone wires.

In the 6 years we've driven the many back roads of the area, I've often remarked on the scarcity of meadowlarks. I can remember a time when they were almost as plentiful as their close relatives, the ubiquitous blackbirds. When we moved into our first home, meadowlarks sang from open space across the street from us. Now we literally stop when spying a bright yellow breasted upon a fence post. If we're lucky we'll hear that gorgeous song as well.

In a recent issue of "Birder's World" I read an article on the eastern meadowlark's decline. Along with the field sparrow, grasshopper sparrow and other grassland species, the meadowlark's smaller numbers have been noted and researched at Virginia Tech. Maybe their conclusions are relevant to our birds as well. In the eastern United States many pastures which appear suitable to these birds remain unoccupied by grassland species. It is thought that this is due to farmers' planting more exotic grass species in lieu of

native grasses. Non-native, cool-season grasses improve the nutritional quality of livestock pasture. In the 1940s there were around 400,000 acres of exotic-grass pasture whereas in 1990 that had mushroomed to about 35 million acres!

One drawback is that farmers tend to mow cool-season grasses while grassland chicks are still in their nests, leading to far fewer fledglings. In addition, exotics tend to be turf grasses that grow uniformly and look like plush carpeting. Native species, on the other hand, grow in uneven bunches which provides dirt spaces between stems where birds catch insects. Native grasses tend to support the native insects that birds prefer. The eastern meadowlark builds a rather large nest, often domed and in an animal's hoof print, against a dense clump of grass or weeds. It is interwoven with the clumps and has a side entrance. Our western bird builds a similar nest, but prefers dry ground to the damp ground its eastern relative likes. Farmers also fertilize the exotic grasses, another deterrent to the grassland birds' habitat.

Meadowlarks are not larks at all but are members of the large icterid family (my Audubon encyclopedia puts them in the larger troupial family) which includes blackbirds, orioles, bobolinks, grackles and cowbirds. The only similarity between these varied birds' are their long, sharp, black beaks. Meadowlarks were so named by early settlers who thought they were similar to the

Save San Francisco's Quails

Golden Gate Audubon is gearing up to start a **SAVE THE QUAIL CAMPAIGN** in San Francisco. This year's Christmas Bird Count showed an alarming decline in California Quail in Golden Gate Park. The Park's quail numbers dropped from 40 in 1997 to just 16 in 1998. The campaign will be a citywide effort to monitor the quail and restore their habitat. If you are interested in joining the campaign to saving the state bird in San Francisco, or have any sightings of quail in San Francisco, please call Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983.

larks in the old world, birds which preferred open country and habitually sang exuberantly while flying. The eastern and western meadowlarks do not normally interbreed where their range overlaps despite their similar appearances. Both have cryptically patterned brown and black on their backs, white outer feathers on their short stubby tails, and sport a black V on bright yellow chests. Western birds appear a bit paler in comparison but are much superior vocalists with a rich, bubbly, flute-like song. Both walk on the ground on fairly long legs. They eat insects and other invertebrates along with grass seeds and will also eat road-kill carrion like their cousin the grackle.

I hope that I'm wrong and that somewhere there are large winter flocks of meadowlarks waiting to declare spring breeding territories along the country roads of California. I've missed their bright yellow breasts and their rollicking songs.

Birdseed sale pick-up on March 26 and 27

It's been a while since our Fall seed sale. It was a really cold winter and if your birds were like ours, they were eating an awful lot of seed to keep up their energy levels. So its time to stock up once again with birdseed to feed our avian friends over the next few months. So send in your order and make sure that there are a bunch of happy birds in your back yard.

Most of our native birds favor either sunflower seeds (chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, white-crowned sparrows, purple and house finches) or niger seed (goldfinches, pine siskins and chickadees). To honor their preferences we have substantially lowered our sunflower seed prices.

If you wish to order seed, please fill out the adjacent seed-order form and mail it to us with a check made out to GGAS, with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Orders should be received in the GGAS office by Thursday, March 19. You will pick-up your seed on either Friday, March 26, from 3-6 PM or on Saturday, March 27, from 9 AM -12 Noon, at the Golden Gate Audubon Office in Berkeley.

We will have plenty of extra seed on hand so if you didn't order enough seed, or forgot to order any seed at all, come on down to the office. We'll have the seed you need!

Volkman seed is the best there is, it contains no waste seed and has been cleaned of debris and dust so you get what you pay for. If you have a question about which kind of seed to buy give us a call at the GGAS Office, 510-843-2222.

The Duncraft Feeder is a 16" long tube seed-feeder and, as always, we have a variety of hummingbird feeders and a fun thistle seed feeder (the birds twirl around as if on a carousel).

We are also offering GGAS hats. These hats are black, baseball-style caps adorned with our now famous GGAS logo. They really are quite lovely and you'll enjoy wearing them. These hats cost \$15. Please add \$2 for postage and handling if you want us to mail them to you.

Finally, we have beautiful GGAS T-shirts for sale for a very reasonable \$10. These shirts are imprinted with Alan Hopkins wonderful drawing of a Western Snowy Plover. Again, add \$2 for postage and handling if you want us to mail you the T-shirt and don't forget to tell us the size you want (S, M, L).

Remember, your purchases provide an important source of income to GGAS, allowing us to continue our conservation, education and field trip activities. We look forward to seeing you on seed sale day.

GGAS BIRD SEED AND FEEDER SALE

ORDER AND PREPAY BY MARCH 18, 1999

PICK UP FRIDAY, MARCH 26, SATURDAY, MARCH 27

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

TELEPHONE (DAY) _____ (EVENING) _____

SEED	QUANTITY	AMOUNT
GGAS' OWN MIX	20 lbs.	\$ 9.00
Contains only red and white millet	50 lbs.	\$19.50
and black oil sunflower seed		
VOLKMAN PREMIUM	20 lbs.	\$ 8.50
WILD BIRD SEED	50 lbs.	\$18.50
Composed of only red and white millet		
— no sunflower seeds (no squirrels)		
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED	25 lbs.	\$11.00
	50 lbs.	\$20.00
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER CHIPS	25 lbs.	\$22.00
(No waste!)		
NIGER (THISTLE) SEED	5 lbs.	\$8.00
FEEDERS		
DUNCRAFT SEED FEEDER 16"		\$28.00
THISTLE FEEDER		\$10.00
SQUIRREL PROOF FEEDER		\$46.16
HUMMINGBIRD (window)		\$10.00
HUMMZINGER (saucer style)		\$15.50
HUMMINGBIRD (16 oz. bottle)		\$12.00
SUET CAGE (2" x 5" x 5")		\$ 5.50
SUET CAKE (11.75 oz.)		\$ 2.75
GGAS Hat		\$15.00
GGAS T-shirt		\$10.00

	SUB-TOTAL	
Be sure to include	8.25% SALES TAX	
your check with a	TOTAL	
stamped and self-	CONTRIBUTION TO GGAS	
addressed envelope.	POSTAGE FOR HATS & T-SHIRTS	
Pick up in Berkeley at	GRAND TOTAL	
the GGAS office		

1998 Bird Count Results

Continued from page 1

(82,521 individuals). This may be because this year's cold and windy weather made the count from our boats and along the Bay shore lower than normal. However, 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998 are four of the five years with the lowest number of individuals in the 25 years for which

we have recorded numbers in our database. Is all the development in our count circle finally catching up with us, resulting in fewer birds wintering here? Are we focused on looking for rare birds and not recording all the individuals of the common birds we see? We had record lows for the following species: Brandt's Cormorant (12), American Wigeon

(523, which is the second year in a row of a record low number of this species for the count), Semipalmated Plover (2), Herring Gull (13, which is the second year in a row of a record low number for the count), Mourning Dove (540, which is the second year in a row of a record low number for the count), Western Scrub-jay (467, Steller's Jays were at near

1998 Oakland Christmas Bird Count

7 Red-throated Loon	1 Tufted Duck	1252 Am. Avocet	307 Anna's Hummingbird	2 Loggerhead Shrike
3 Pacific Loon	5892 Greater Scaup	44 Greater Yellowlegs	1 Selasphorus, sp	1751 Eur. Starling
53 Com. Loon	1135 Lesser Scaup	4 yellowlegs, sp	11 Belted Kingfisher	38 Hutton's Vireo
1 loon, sp	5987 scaup, sp	2032 Willet	22 Acorn Woodpecker	1 Tennessee Warbler
265 Pied-billed Grebe	5365 Surf Scoter	17 Spotted Sandpiper	15 Red-breast. Sapsuck	8 Orange-crowned War.
131 Horned Grebe	11 White-winged Scoter	16 Whimbrel	72 Nuttalls Woodpecker	16 Yellow-rump. Myrtle
1 Red-necked Grebe	773 Com. Goldeneye	106 Long-billed Curlew	25 Downy Woodpecker	339 Yellow-rumpAudubon
68 Eared Grebe	74 Barrow's Goldeneye	1045 Marbled Godwit	11 Hairy Woodpecker	860 Yellow-rumped War.
172 W. Grebe	1101 Bufflehead	6 Ruddy Turnstone	1 N. Yellow-s Flicker	118 Townsend's Warbler
50 Clark's Grebe	12 Hooded Merganser	44 Black Turnstone	241 N. Red-s Flicker	1 Palm Warbler
36 Aechmophorus, sp	147 Com. Merganser	2 Surfbird	23 N. Flicker	1 Black&white Warbler
19 Am. White Pelican	43 Red-breast Mergan.	33 Red Knot	1 N.Yel-sh.XRed-sh	2 Com. Yellowthroat
318 Brown Pelican	2036 Ruddy Duck	227 Sanderling	138 Black Phoebe	231 Spotted Towhee
163 Double-crest Corm.	90 duck, sp	5211 W. Sandpiper	11 Say's Phoebe	632 California Towhee
12 Brandt's Cormorant	154 Turkey Vulture	426 Least Sandpiper	30 Tree Swallow	10 Rufous-crowned Spa.
4 Pelagic Cormorant	8 Osprey	1980 Dunlin	296 Steller's Jay	23 Savannah Sparrow
31 Great Blue Heron	6 White-tailed Kite	1732 peep, sp	467 W. Scrub-Jay	156 Fox Sparrow
89 Great Egret	2 Bald Eagle	161 Short-billed Dow.	171 Am. Crow	224 Song Sparrow
142 Snowy Egret	2 adult(s)	9 Long-billed Dow.	89 Com. Raven	6 Lincoln's Sparrow
1 Cattle Egret	20 N. Harrier	595 dowitcher, sp	728 Chestnut-back Chick	8 White-throated Spa.
1 Green Heron	12 Sharp-shinned Hawk	15 Com. Snipe	89 Oak Titmouse	1277 Golden-crowned Spa.
94 Black-c Night-Heron	25 Cooper's Hawk	13 Heermann's Gull	1182 Bushtit	1125 White-crowned Spa.
2 Swan, sp.	10 Accipiter, sp	1526 Mew Gull	90 Red-breast Nuthatch	1344 Dark-eyed Oregon J.
1 G.White-front Goose	22 Red-shouldered Hawk	1868 Ring-billed Gull	27 White-b. Nuthatch	30 Dark-eyed Junco
2 Snow Goose	179 Red-tailed Hawk	1406 California Gull	22 Pygmy Nuthatch	783 Red-wing. Blackbird
1 Ross' Goose	5 Buteo, sp	13 Herring Gull	86 Brown Creeper	25 Tricolor. Blackbird
1976 Canada Goose	7 Golden Eagle	4 Thayer's Gull	7 Rock Wren	293 W. Meadowlark
13 Canada Goose small	3 adult(s)	1760 W. Gull	105 Bewick's Wren	484 Brewer's Blackbird
2 Wood Duck	4 immature(s)	9 W.XGlaucous-wing	1 House Wren	100 Brown-head. Cowbird
1 Green-wing Teal Eur	48 Am. Kestrel	430 Glaucous-winged Gu.	44 Winter Wren	31 Purple Finch
107 Green-wing Teal Am	3 Merlin	1 Glaucous Gull	9 Marsh Wren	602 House Finch
1132 Mallard	7 Peregrine Falcon	3180 gull, sp	350 Golden-cro. Kinglet	113 Pine Siskin
148 N. Pintail	95 California Quail	82 Forster's Tern	1020 Ruby-cro. Kinglet	114 Lesser Goldfinch
2 Blue-winged Teal	5 Clapper Rail	1643 Rock Dove	87 W. Bluebird	81 Am. Goldfinch
39 Cinnamon Teal	5 Virginia Rail	61 Band-tailed Pigeon	209 Hermit Thrush	363 House Sparrow
428 N. Shoveler	1 Sora	540 Mourning Dove	1997 Am. Robin	
234 Gadwall	3954 Am. Coot	3 Barn Owl	90 Varied Thrush	82523 Individuals
2 Eur. Wigeon	946 Black-bellied Plover	9 W. Screech-Owl	116 Wren	181 Species
523 Am. Wigeon	2 Semipalmated Plover	71 Great Horned Owl	26 N. Mockingbird	178 Observers in field
699 Canvasback	177 Killdeer	1 Burrowing Owl	12 California Thrasher	10 Observers at feeder
68 Redhead	4 Black Oystercatcher	3 Long-eared Owl	63 Am. Pipit	
97 Ring-necked Duck	185 Black-necked Stilt	10 N. Saw-whet Owl	295 Cedar Waxwing	

record low numbers), Wrentit (116), Northern Mockingbird (26 which is the second year in a row of a record low number for the count), California Thrasher (12), Cedar Waxwing (295 which is the second year in a row of a record low number for the count), Loggerhead Shrike (2), European Starling (1751 which is the second year in a row of a record low number for the count), Brewer's Blackbird (484) and Lesser Goldfinch (114).

A record low for a particular species for one year shouldn't cause alarm. However, when it happens for several years in a row and/or is repeated over a large number of Christmas Bird Counts in the country, it is worth investigating more closely (e.g., Burrowing Owls). Of course, the fact that we have recorded Bald Eagles wintering in the area for several of the last few years after not having seen them at all in the earlier years of the count and have had several years of high Peregrine Falcon numbers is worth celebrating. For us, the record low numbers of Starlings is also a positive development.

Thanks to the faithful area leaders new and old (awards were presented to the 9 who had been leaders for 20 years or more). Consistency and knowledge of the areas produce the best results so we hope our new leaders will continue to lead for many more years too. Thanks to Art for all his support in our Chapter's office and Jane Larkin and Jean Lucken who collected money at the count dinner. Thanks to William

It's Audubon Canyon Ranch Time Again

What is ACR? Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR) is a conservation organization that now operates three sanctuaries in the North Bay, two in Marin and one in Sonoma County. It started out when a group of people heard that there was a plan to create a new residential community in Bolinas Lagoon. The Golden Gate, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies stepped in and joined with local folks in defeating that development proposal. Shortly after, the ACR Bolinas Preserve heron and egret rookery was purchased again with the help of the Audubon Societies. In fact, we recently came across a tax paper that indicates that GGAS might have been the purchasing agent and briefly owned the Bolinas Preserve before it was transferred to ACR.

In any case, ever since that time GGAS has served on the Board of ACR and has worked to make ACR the great sanctuary system that it is.

One of the joys of working with ACR is that you get to go to the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve and see all those beautiful birds preening, courting, mating, laying eggs, incubating, hatching and then fledging the chicks. It's life, and most of us see all too little of it nowadays.

Well, here's your excuse to get away for a day and experience nature. Become an ACR host. Each year from mid-March to mid-July the Bolinas Preserve is open **weekends** to all visitors. The Bolinas Preserve gets thousands of visitors each year and we need volunteers to help direct the visitors to the trails, the birds, the nature museum, the bookstore and of course, the bathrooms.

It's a lot of fun. ACR will send you all the information you need so that you will be well informed when people ask you questions about the birds. You'll meet interesting people and provide a real service to ACR. And you get to see the birds and the redwoods yourself (we have enough hosts each weekend day, so that every gets time to go off for a walk to enjoy the preserve).

You will be hosting with fellow GGAS members who are a very enjoyable bunch of people. After all, you are one.

So please call our ACR-Host volunteer coordinator Bill Hering at 415-863-3625 and sign up for spring day at ACR's Bolinas Preserve. This year we are hosting on April 17 and 18, May 1, 2, 8, 9, June 6, 26 and July 3, 4. Call Bill and work out a day you can make and have a great time.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Giddens our caterer for the great food, and Ann Howard who arranged for the caterer and set up for the count dinner. Nick Story helped by making a giant wall chart of species likely to be seen to help us tally our count results. Thanks to John Robinson & Helen Green who formed the Rare Bird Committee. Of course thanks to all who participated in the count and shared their great

stories at the count dinner. We hope to see everyone again next year! Mark your calendar for Sunday, December 19, 1999.

Your compilers:
Clyde Morris & Joelle Buffa
(510-494-1098)
4251 Tanager Terrace;
Fremont, CA 94555

Oakland CBC Leaders Recognized

Ten individuals who have been Oakland Christmas Bird Count (CBC) leaders for 20 years or more were recognized at the compilation dinner on Sunday, December 20, 1998. The Chapter presented the following leaders with an award to honor their years of dedicated service, which cumulatively total more than two centuries of CBC-ing:

Each leader received a beautiful framed color lithograph of a different bay area bird (green heron, white-tailed kite, black rail, barn owl, red breasted sapsucker, roadrunner, rock wren, common yellowthroat, and Lincoln's sparrow). The lithographs, by artist Allan Brooks, were from the original plates for ornithologist William L. Dawson's classic 1923 Birds of California 3-volume series.

The recognition ceremony was done to kick-off the 100th anniversary of the CBC, which will be celebrated with the 1999 count. These leaders deserve our appreciation for their years of volunteers service, for the number of less-experienced birders they have guided and influenced, and because their consistency has contributed greatly to maintaining reliable data.



Least Terns and Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge

Please help the California least tern by working with the Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge (GGAS) to aid in the control of vegetation at the least tern nesting area at Alameda Point (the former Alameda Naval Air Station). A work party is planned for Saturday, March 20, 1999, from 8:45 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. (It is not necessary to stay for the entire period). Everyone is welcome to join in this effort. Interested persons should call Laura Collins (ASAP) at 510-843-3262.

	CBC AREA	YEARS LEADING
George Peyton	North Boat	25 years
Bob Hirt	Emeryville, So. Boat, and others	24 years
Leora Feeney	Alameda	25 years
David Rice	San Leandro Bay	21 years
Dave Quady & Bob Lewis	Claremont Cyn	23 years
Russ Wilson	San Leandro Reservoir	20 years
Meg Pauletich	Orinda	25 years
Helen & Paul Green	Tilden South & others	
	Co-compiler 5 years	24 years

Bid Now for Your Own Leitz Binoculars

Your Chance to Buy a Pair of Leitz Binoculars at an Extraordinary Price Equals a Wonderful Gift to GGAS

Leitz is one of the foremost names in the world of optics. A very thoughtful GGAS member has donated to GGAS a wonderful pair of Leitz Trinovid 7X42 binoculars and is allowing us to sell these binoculars and use the proceeds to help us further our conservation and education goals. Here is your opportunity to get one of the best binoculars made for a once in a lifetime low price.

We are offering these binoculars to you through a silent auction process. What this means is that you let us know what you are willing to pay for this wonderful pair of binoculars and if no one bids higher, they're yours. These binoculars, if sold today, would be priced at about \$900, but we'll start the bidding at \$300. Of course, we hope you will be generous and offer more.

These Leitz binoculars are about 10 years old but have hardly been used and are in essentially new condition (they look like new and have no scratches on the lenses) and come with a very nice carrying case.

These binoculars are now sold under the Leica brand name. Leitz is the parent company of Leica. You'll never have another chance to get a wonderful pair of binoculars at such a low cost. Make a bid!

If you would like to see the binoculars before bidding, come on down to the Office and have a look. We are open Tuesday through Friday, 9 AM to 12 noon and 1PM to 4 PM. But please call first because we are not always here (we go to a lot of meetings). To make your bid please call or write the GGAS office on or before March 27, 1999. Our phone number is 510-843-2222. Our address is 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702.

In Memoriam

Elvis J. Stahr, Ph.D, President, National Audubon Society, 1968-1979.

The board notes with sadness the passing of Dr. Elvis J. Stahr on November 11, 1998, president of the National Audubon Society from 1968-1979. Dr. Stahr, a champion of conservation, including our California projects, was instrumental in the acquisition of Pt. Pinole, now a regional park, and was a leader in getting legislation passed so non-profit organizations could politically express their environmental concerns. Dr. Stahr was secretary of the Army during the Kennedy administration, and president both the University of Indiana and the University of Kentucky before becoming president of the National Audubon Society. He was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

Gifts and Bequests

Golden Eagle - \$1,000

Peregrine Falcon - \$500

Least Tern Circle

(\$200 or more)

Mr and Mrs Douglas Leach

Clapper Rail Circle

(\$100 or more)

Jacklyn T Bort,
Patricia M Gannon
and Carol T Paine

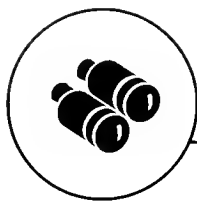
In Memoriam

Nahid Steinberg,
Myers-Stevens & Co

Gifts (under \$100)

Katherine and Krehe Ritter, M.R.
Studhalter, Isako and Roy
Egawa, Maeve Reddin, Janice
McDermott, Robert Freidenberg,
Barbara Maynard, John
Derdivanis, Grace and Everett
Bliss, Jeremy Hewes, Lois
Hughes, B.W. Tobey, L. LaBrash,
Suzanne and William Hering,
Karen Rosenbaum and Ben
McClinton, Elana Swartzman and
Scott Benson, Mr and Mrs Earl
Hamlin, Camille Solyagua
Photography,
Christine and Donald Luppino,
Loisann Jacovitz, Martin
Reutinger, Mary Jane Deddo
and Stephen Hahn, Jaye Cook,
and Caroline Erickson.

The Society Welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in The Gull, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.



January 1 - 26, 1999

The New Year celebration began in my Berkeley neighborhood with flocks of robins and waxwings enjoying their annual berry festival. A sprinkling of Varied Thrushes added their delightful color to the feeding flocks throughout the Bay Area. The cool, clear and dry weather that began in late December continued into early January, allowing excellent birding. In contrast to the low numbers recorded for some CBC's in the cold week before Christmas, several Northern California locations recorded all-time high species numbers; e.g., the Oakland CBC (181 species, Dec. 20), the Parkfield CBC (102 species, Dec. 28), the Pinnacles CBC (126 species, Jan. 2), and the Panoche Valley CBC (92 species, Jan. 3). A few sightings from the last week of

December received too late for last month's column are included in the report.

Albatross to Ducks

The Laysan Albatross continuing at Point Area, MEN, was seen up until at least Jan. 21 (Doug Shaw, MOB). The only Black-footed Albatross report came from a Jan. 18 MTY Bay pelagic trip (DLSh). Recent telemetry studies reported in the Feb./Mar. 1999 issue of [National Wildlife] indicate that albatrosses are eligible for some frequent-flyer miles! One Laysan Albatross made 4 round trips of 4000 miles each from Tern Island N. of Hawaii to the Aleutians to feed a single chick, and a Black-footed Albatross clocked almost 25,000 miles in 3 months between Tern Island and the Northern CA coast. The aforementioned pelagic trip noted 12 Pink-footed, 159 Short-tailed and 105 Black-vented Shearwaters, as well as the year's first report of a **Manx Shearwater** (*Puffinus puffinus*) (DLSh).

The released California Condors noted last month were at still at the redwoods near the lodge in Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, MTY, with 3-5 birds seen until at least Jan. 13 (MS, MOB). At least 50 Ross's Geese were sighted over ALA, HUM, MEN, MTY, PLA, SBT, SM, SCL, and SCZ counties, with the largest group of 20 near the Moon Glow Dairy, MTY, Jan. 14-18 (MPRBA). Presumably that flock was unable to land in its normal locale in the Central Valley because of heavy fog there. There was an adult **Whooper Swan** (*Cygnus cygnus*) seen in a flock of Tundra Swans SW of Chico, GLE, Jan. 1 (SE). This swan is a Eurasian species closely related to the Trumpeter Swan. Although a regular winter visitor to Aleutians, it is extremely rare in our state, with most or all records from Northern CA (Small, 1994). Hopefully this observation will be submitted to the CBRC for review.

Thirty or more Eurasian Wigeons were seen over BUT, MRN, MTY, SAC, SM, and SCL counties. A male Tufted Duck was at Las Gallinas Sewage Ponds, MRN, Jan. 1 (BWi), another near Pt. Emery spit, ALA, Jan. 5-21 (KS, GE, FB), a pair in San Rafael, Jan. 2, MRN, (KS), and two females at Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant, SCL, Jan. 6 (SR). High count for Harlequin Ducks was 8 at Glass Beach, MEN, Jan. (GE). Single

birds were spotted at the Monterey Wharf, MTY, Jan. 4 (MPRBA), at the vista point north of Hearst Castle, SLO, Jan. 7 (MPRBA), and on the San Joaquin R., FRE & MAD, Jan. 16-23 (JL, MOB). The same White-winged Scoter reported Dec. 25 continued at Pacific Hts. Rd., BUT, up to Jan. 10 (ME, RR). At least 12 Oldsquaws were reported over ALA, HUM, MRN, MEN, MER, MTY, SM, and SON counties during the period. High count for Barrow's Goldeneyes was a group of 16 at the Petaluma R. mouth, SON, ~ Jan. 16 (RS). There were at least 70 Hooded Mergansers within ALA, BUT, GLE, MRN, MEN, MTY, SAC, SON, SOL, and YOL counties. The prize for Hooded Merganser numbers went to a flock of 15 at the Redwood Shores Sewage Treatment Plant, SM, Jan. 3 (KH).

Raptors to Skimmers

Swainson's Hawks were represented by a light-morph bird continuing from November still in Half Moon Bay, SM, Dec. 31 (PM), one adult dark morph at Harkins Slough Rd., SCZ, Jan. 21-25 (BSc, MOB), and 5 dark morphs at San Luis NWR, MER, Jan. 23 (LP). The Panoche Valley, SBT/ FRE, hosted 4 Ferruginous Hawks on Jan. 24 (TG, LG), while there were 3 in Peach Tree Valley, MTY, Jan. 17 (MPRBA). Reports of individual birds were came from DN, SBT, and YOL counties over the period. Single Rough-legged Hawks were observed near Hollister, SBT, Dec. 31 (JS), the Panoche Valley, SBT, Jan. 3 (CK, SAI, DLSh), at Hwy. 37 & Lakeville Rd., SON, Jan. 20 (BH) and several others were seen along Baseline Rd., PLA, Jan. 16 (PD).

The only [Pluvialis] report was of 4 Pacific Golden-Plovers at the Modesto Sewage Ponds, STA, Jan. 19 (FB). The largest flocks of Mountain Plovers reported were 17 on Little Panoche Rd., SBT, Jan. 3 (CK, SA, DLSh), and 20 at the Road 102-Road 16 intersection, YOL, Jan. 24 (BMu). A Lesser Yellowlegs, very uncommon in winter north of SE, was reported from Arcata Bottoms, HUM, Jan. 25 (DF). Two Rock Sandpipers were seen where a single bird is often found in winter, on the rocks at MacKerricher State Park, MEN, Jan. 3 (DT), and one of these continued through the period (DS, LS, GC).

Again this month, there was a nice accumulation of rare gulls. A **Slaty-backed Gull** (*Larus schistisagus*), a

Warbler Sightings

Nashville Warbler

Jan. 17 Rio Park, Carmel, MTY MPRBA

Yellow Warbler

Jan. 1 Moss Landing, MTY PM

Magnolia Warbler

Jan. 8-10 Alamitos Creek Trail, SCL JM, NL

Black-throated Blue Warbler

Jan. 10 Saratoga, SCL NL

Grace's Warbler

Jan. 1-25 Jack's Peak Park, MTY TG, ST, MOB
(First reported Dec. 12)

Prairie Warbler

Jan. 1-8 Owl Canyon, SON DS, FB, KVV

Palm Warbler

Jan. 1 Moss Landing, MTY PM
Jan. 2-3 Pescadero Rd., SM RT, AW
Jan. 1 Foster City, SM AW
Jan. 1 Pacific Grove, MTY TG
Jan. 23 Sea Cloud Park, SM MH
~Jan. 18 Sonoma Marina, SON RS

Black-and-white Warbler

Dec. 28 Pilarcitos Ck., SM AW

American Redstart

Jan. 3 Pescadero Ck., SM AW

Northern Waterthrush

Jan. 23 Arcata Marsh, HUM EE

Siberian species and uncommon summer and rare fall visitor to w. Alaska and Aleutians, was reported on Jan. 18. This report came from Crescent City, DN (AB fide CN). Another recent observation was made in Nov. and Dec. in YOL county. There are no previously accepted CA records, although two from SAC county are currently being reviewed. An immature Franklin's Gull was SW of Point Pinos, MTY, Jan. 4 (MPRBA). A basic-plumaged adult **Little Gull** (*Larus minutus*) flew over Alviso, SCL, Dec. 31 (ST). As its name implies, it is the world's smallest gull, a very rare visitor to our state, with most records in the winter (Small, 1994). Of special interest is that the Little Gull is a Eurasian species with its first New World nesting recorded in 1962. This bird now breeds in Canada and winters on the E. coast of the U.S. (Harrison, 1985). The 3rd winter **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*) remained at Lake Cunningham, San Jose, SCL, Dec. 31, Jan. 9 (KK, DS). Glaucous Gulls were found in many locations, with 17 birds reported over DN, HUM, MEN, MTY, SBT, SM, SCZ, and SON counties. Three Black Skimmers were present for the Moss Landing, MTY, CBC, Jan. 1 (PM).

Hummingbirds to Orioles

A Costa's Hummingbird, which has few winter records in Northern CA, was at a private residence in SAC County Jan. 14 (JC). Another was found at Pt. Richmond, CC, Jan. 24 (BL). Early [*Selasphorus*] arrivals included Allen's Hummingbirds in the Eucalyptus Grove, Moss Landing, MTY, Jan. 14 (MPRBA) and at Pine Gulch Creek, Bolinas, MRN, Jan. 23 (KB). A juvenile Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was near San Rafael H.S., MRN, Jan. 2 (EB fide KS), and single Red-naped Sapsuckers were at Prunedale, MTY, Jan. 7 (MPRBA) and at Traylor Ranch Bird Sanctuary, PLA, Jan. 14 (CH), well out of their normal winter range in Southeastern CA. An Eastern Phoebe was found Jan. 8-9 at Shady Oaks Park, SCL (BR, DS).

A **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) first reported Dec. 23 was still at Bodega Campground, SON, Jan. 1-8 (DS, KVV, RRu). Another individual was at El Granada, SM, Jan. 17 (BS fide BM). The Tropical Kingbird reported last month was still in residence at Hidden Valley Park, CC, Jan. 5-22 (FB, DS, MOB). A

Cassin's Kingbird was near Gilroy, SCL, Dec. 30 (SR). This species has nested there for the last 2 years. Another two Cassin's Kingbirds were reported from the Panoche area, SBT, Jan. 3-24 (CK, MOB). A very rare kingbird, the **Thick-billed Kingbird** (*Tyrannus crassirostris*), first reported in December, remained until at least Jan. 26 at Half Moon Bay, SM (KHi, MOB). If accepted, this observation would be only the 2nd N. Ca record of the species; the first was in SF in 1971. Photographs of this bird are published on Joe Morlan's website. A Plumbeous Vireo, a Southwestern species, was in Caswell S.P., SJ, Jan. 2 (MM). A single Cassin's Vireo, not often found in winter, was noted during the Parkfield, MTY, CBC Dec. 28 (DLSh). Even more unusual was a **Blue-headed Vireo** (*Vireo solitarius*), rare in winter, found near Pescadero Ck., SM, Jan. 2 (Ron Thorn).

Reported as a second record for San Mateo county was a Pinyon Jay at the Pulgas Water Temple, SM, Jan. 16 (RT). An early Barn Swallow was spotted at Coyote Hills Regional Park, ALA, Jan. 9 (BL), two were at Moss Landing, MTY, Jan. 22 (MPRBA), and another was found at Olema Marsh, MRN, Jan. 23 (RS). High count for Mountain Bluebirds was 81 at the Parkfield CBC, MTY, Dec. 28 (DLSh). An unusual mountain location for a Northern Mockingbird was in Lewiston, TRI, Jan. 2 (JH). Up to 7 Sage Thrashers were reported from the Panoche Valley region, SBT/FRE, over the period (DLSh, CK, MOB). Wood warbler sightings were sparse this month, with the most exciting bird being the ongoing **Grace's Warbler** (*Dendroica graciae*) at Jack's Peak State Park, MTY (see chart).

A Clay-colored Sparrow and a Chipping Sparrow, both especially rare away from coastal areas in winter, were among a flock of juncos and White-crowned Sparrows at Lake McSwain Recreation Area, MRP, Jan. 10 (JL). Vesper Sparrows were at several spots all over the Panoche Valley, FRE/SBT, during the month, and five birds were in Peach Tree Valley, MTY, Jan. 17 (MPRBA). Panoche Valley also recorded a few Sage Sparrows, and one other report came from Mt. St. Helena, NAP, Jan. 6 (DS). A Lark Bunting was along Maxwell Sites Rd., COL, Jan. 2 (JS), two were on Panoche Rd., SBT, Jan. 3 (CK, SAI, DLSh), another on Gloria-Camphora Rd., SBT, Jan. 2 (DLSh), and 2-

Abbreviations for Observers.

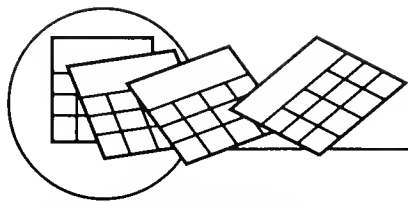
SA, Steve Allen; SAI, Steve Allison; AB, Alan Barron; FB, Florence Bennett; EB, Ellen Bluestein; KB, Ken Burton; JC, Jeff Cesar; GC, George Chaniot; PD, Pierre Delastre; SE, Steve Edmunds; AE, Al Eisner; EE, Elias Elias; GL, Graham Etherington; ME, Mike Feighner; DF, David Fix; JG, Jim Gain; SG, Steve Glover; LG, Lois Goldfrank; TG, Tom Grey; KH, Keith Hansen; MH, Merry Havemen; CH, Cliff Hawley; KHi, Kevin Hints; BH, Bob Hogan; JH, John Hunter; CK, Clay Kempf; KK, Keith Kwan; NL, Nick Lethaby; BL, Bob Lewis; CL, Calvin Lou; JL, John Luther; MOB, Many Observers; JM, John Mariana; BM, Bert McKee; PM, Peter Metropulos; MM, Mark Miller; BMu, Brennan Mulrooney; CN, Christy Nelson; DvN, David Nelson; LP, Larry Parmeter; RR, Richard Redmond; BR, Bob Reiling; SR, Steve Rottenborn; RRu, Ruth Rudicill; BS, Barry Sauppe; BSc, Barb Scharf; DS, Doug Shaw; DLSh, Debra Love Shearwater; MS, Madeline Spencer; RS, Rich Stallcup; JS, John Sterling; LS, Lang Stevenson; KS, Kirk Swenson; ST, Scott Terrill; RT, Ron Thorn; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; KVV, Kent Van Vuren; BW, Bruce Webb; DW, Dan Williams; BWi, Bill Wilson; AW, Adam Winer

Abbreviations for Counties and Others.

Alameda, ALA; Butte, BUT; Christmas Bird Count, CBC; Colusa, COL; Contra Costa, CC; California Bird Records Committee, CRBC; Del Norte, DN; Fresno, FRE; Glenn, GLE; Golden Gate Park, GGP; Humboldt, HUM; Madera, MAD; Marin, MRN; Mariposa, MRP; Mendocino, MEN; Merced, MER; Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert, MPRBA; Monterey, MTY; Napa, NAP; Placer, PLA; Sacramento, SAC; San Benito, SBT; San Francisco, SF; San Joaquin, SJ; San Luis Obispo, SLO; San Mateo, SM; Santa Clara, SCL; Santa Cruz, SCZ; Solano, SOL; Sonoma, SON; Stanislaus, STA; Trinity, TRI; Yolo, YOL

3 more were in a large flock of Savannah and White-crowned Sparrows near Turlock Lake, STA, Jan. 24 (JG). A single Grasshopper Sparrow, considered an accidental in winter in Northern CA, was at Little Panoche Road, SBT/FRE (SG). Eight Swamp Sparrows were reported over GLE, MRN, MTY, and SM counties, while 14 White-throated Sparrows were seen within ALA, BUT, CC, MRN, SAC, SBT, SM, SCL, SON, and YOL counties. A single Harris' Sparrow was found in a large flock of White-crowned Sparrows at Grizzly Island, SOL, Jan. 24 (DW). The only Longspur report was of a Lapland Longspur on Camphora Gloria Rd., Gonzales, MTY, Jan. 17 (MPRBA). A young male Dickcissel was at Keith Hansen's Gallery, Bolinas, MTY, Jan. 21 (KH). This species, a Midwestern/Eastern species in serious decline, is an extremely rare January visitor to CA. An unusual mountain location for a Tricolored Blackbird was Lewiston, TRI, Jan. 2 (JH).

The five Great-tailed Grackles at Beals Point, PLA, Jan. 22 (BW) were another indication of how this species is expanding its range, first appearing in Southern CA in 1964, and gradually moving northward (Small, 1964). The Orchard Oriole reported last month continued at North Lake, GGP, SF, until Jan. 10 (CL, AE, DvN), and another remained in Bodega Bay, SON, up to Jan. 8 (DS, KVV, RRu). A third individual was at Coyote Point Park, SM, Jan. 10 (RT). Baltimore Orioles continued at North Lake, GGP, SF (CL, DS) until at least Jan. 4 and another stayed at Carmel Mission, MTY (JM, MPRBA, MF) through Jan. 25.



March Meeting

The History and Preservation of the Bermuda Petrel (Cahow)

A slide show featuring the work of Dr. David Wingate

Our March meeting features Carl Burke who will tell us how a gadfly Petrel, or as the

Bermuda natives call it "Cahow", was nursed back from the brink of extinction by Dr. David Wingate. This secretive bird, rediscovered in 1951 after 300 years of presumed extinction, has regained a toehold in the area near Nonsuch Island in the Bermudas.

Carl's presentation will highlight a slide show chronicling Dr. Wingate's life work with the Cahow. After a 40-year career Dr. Wingate has managed to increase the breeding population from 18 pairs to over 50 today. This remarkable story of the Cahow is inspiring. It proves that one person can make a difference.

So please join Carl Burke from the Sacramento Audubon Society as he takes us on a 45-minute cruise of Bermuda's lush tropical islands, splendid with colorful houses and

Thursday, March 18, 1999

7:00 p.m.

The Josephine Randall Museum

San Francisco

legendary pink beaches.

Once an abundant nesting seabird throughout Bermuda, this Petrel (*Pterodroma cahow*) was thought extinct for three centuries before 15 pairs were rediscovered breeding on tiny islets in Castle Harbour between 1951 and 1961. Since then the seabird has made a slow but steady return to the point where there are over fifty pairs. Last year thirty-two chicks had fledged. Two were known to have failed. According to Bermuda Audubon a total of twenty-nine departed successfully (one more than last year). There are now fifty-five breeding pairs including five new pairs established last season.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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